INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING THE ELIMINATION OF HARMFUL FISHING SUBSIDIES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO OVERCAPACITY IN COMMERCIAL FISHING FLEETS WORLDWIDE AND THAT LEAD TO THE OVERFISHING OF GLOBAL FISH STOCKS

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, the international community finds itself today at a crossroads with respect to certain policy decisions that will affect the future of the world's fisheries resources. The impacts of the decisions that the international community is poised to make in the coming weeks and months will determine the future sustainability of global fish stocks, including those stocks traditionally harvested by our domestic fishing industry.

Among the challenges to ensuring the sustainability of the world's fisheries resources is the increasing demand for protein by consumers globally. It is precisely this demand for protein that has led to overcapacity in commercial fishing fleets worldwide, and that in turn, is leading to the reported depletion of global fish stocks. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports that 75 percent of the world's fish stocks are considered over-fished, fully exploited, significantly depleted, or rebuilding under protective management. Some countries have recognized these depletion trends and the current vulnerability of fish stocks. The United States is among these countries. Together, these countries have taken swift action to responsibly manage, the catch volume and capacity of their domestic fishing fleets. Other countries, however, have not taken similar steps to mitigate the risks to global fish stocks or sought to manage the catch volume and capacity of their fleets from a global sustainability perspective. In fact, their fleets continue to grow in number despite these alarming trends. This imbalance needs to be addressed by the international community and the United States is in a position to exercise leadership and must do so.

In the United States, we are doing what we can to restore, protect, and manage the precious fishery resources within our Exclusive Economic Zone. The most recent reauthorization of the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires that overfishing end by 2011. In addition, the United States government no longer provides economic incentives to build new fishing vessels as it once did two decades ago. Unfortunately, the leadership that the United States and others have demonstrated by proactively and responsibly reprioritizing financial assistance for domestic fishing fleets toward fisheries management programs and services and away from outright subsidies for growing fleet capacity has not been uniformly followed by the international community.

Government subsidies for vessel construction and operation are common in many countries around the world. In these countries, too little of these subsidies go toward beneficial causes such as improving fisheries management and science. Rather, much of it goes to subsidize harmful activity, such as increased fuel consumption and fleet expansion. These harmful subsidies artificially decrease the cost of fishing and make it a profitable trade for thousands of vessels which without the benefit of these subsidies could not compete in the marketplace. Current estimates reveal that the sheer number of vessels actively fishing around the world today is 250 percent greater than what is actually necessary to fish at sustainable levels.

Because of the interconnected nature of marine ecosystems, the impacts of overfishing of one stock in one region can have a profound, detrimental and cascading effect across the entire ocean ecosystem. Ecosystems span political boundaries. The effects and consequences of one country's policies and practices that give rise to overfishing, even if limited in its occurrence to be within its own waters, are realized and borne by other countries. But the problem does not stop there. Vessels are increasingly forced to travel farther distances away from their own home ports and familiar waters to contend with increased local competition and in response to a reduction in littoral fish stocks. In many cases, the high seas and even the Exclusive Economic Zones of other countries become enticing targets.

The United States—like other countries—reserves the exclusive right to fish within its 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Hundreds of foreign vessels each year, however, are intercepted while fishing illegally in U.S. waters. This rise in illegal fishing is placing additional pressure on our already exploited resources, damaging our marine ecosystems, and taking away potential revenue from our domestic fishing industry. In 2006 alone, the United States Coast Guard intercepted 164 vessels fishing in our EEZ. This statistic is troubling. But what is even more troubling is the fact that this number represents only the number of vessels that were actually caught. It does not represent the total threat or existence of foreign fishing in our waters, particularly in waters where enforcement is difficult such as the waters around Guam.

On Guam the problem of illegal fishing is insignificant. The Western Central Pacific area, which includes the EEZs around Hawaii, Guam and the other U.S. islands and territories in that region, is considered one of the Coast Guard's three highest threat areas for foreign fishing. The U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Russia borders are the other two. In 2006, the Coast Guard recorded 11 incidents of illegal foreign fishing in the Western Central Pacific area. Since 2000, the Coast Guard has intercepted an average of 34 vessels per year. And, as mentioned earlier, this only represents the vessels that are being caught. There is no way to assess with any certainty how many other vessels are fishing illegally in our waters and thereby harming our fishing fleet by harvesting the fish stocks found within our EEZ.

The species targeted in the Western Central Pacific area are generally extremely valuable, highly migratory species like tuna. Thus, the economic impact of illegal fishing is significant. Additionally, the long-term impact of overfishing on long-lived, predatory species such as tuna compounds the effect on the ocean ecosystem and economy.

The problem of illegal foreign fishing is exacerbated by the fact that complete and comprehensive monitoring and enforcement by the Coast Guard of all U.S. waters is impractical. The Coast Guard Living Marine Resource Law Enforcement Division is responsible for patrolling over 3.36 million square miles of ocean, much of which is extremely remote and subject to harsh conditions. The Coast Guard simply does not have the resources to patrol all waters and at all times.

At the same time, the countries whose vessels are the most likely to be found illegally fishing in the U.S. EEZ are also countries that provide large capacity-increasing subsidies to their fishing fleets. Because enforcement is so difficult, it is even more important that we attack the issue at its root by encouraging worldwide capacity reduction and by discouraging other countries from making it economically feasible for their vessels to travel into our waters to fish.

Today, I am introducing a concurrent resolution to encourage our government to work with other countries to bring about an end to the harmful subsidies that contribute to overcapacity in commercial fishing fleets and that lead to overfishing of global fish stocks. The continuing support of otherwise unsustainable fleets by certain countries means an ongoing threat to our country's marine resources and our domestic fishing industry.

While we have no direct control over the actions of foreign governments, the Doha Round of the current World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations have placed the United States in a unique position to influence the future use of harmful fisheries subsidies by these other countries. Through these negotiations the United States is presented with an opportunity to exercise its leadership internationally toward the phasing out of subsidies that increase fishing capacity and that promote overfishing. By passing this concurrent resolution, Congress can demonstrate to the world its support for our government as they move forward with these negotiations.

It is my hope that my colleagues will support this concurrent resolution and that they will join me in encouraging action to protect the interests of our domestic fishing industry, our marine resources, and the sustainability of global fish stocks for the greater and shared interests of all members of the international community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT HATE CRIMES PREVENTION ACT OF 2007

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the bipartisan Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007, along with Representatives KIRK, FRANK, SHAYS, BALDWIN, ROS-LEHTINEN, NADLER and BONO. As of today there are more than 100 original cosponsors. This legislation will provide assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies and amend federal law to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of violent, bias-motivated crimes. Last Congress, this legislation passed with bipartisan support as H. Amdt 544 to the Child Safety Act (H.R.

3132) by a vote of 223–199. Bipartisan majorities also voted in favor of hate crime legislation in the 108th and 106th Congresses.

The Hate Crimes Prevention Act has attracted the support of over 210 civil rights, education, religious, and civic organizations. Importantly, virtually every major law enforcement organization in the country has endorsed the bill—including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National District Attorneys Association, the National Sheriffs Association, the Police Executive Research Forum, and 31 state Attorneys General.

Bias crimes are disturbingly prevalent and pose a significant threat to the full participation of all Americans in our democratic society. The FBI has the best national data on reported hate crime, though the program is voluntary. Since 1991, the FBI has documented over 113,000 hate crimes. For the year 2005, the most current data available, the FBI compiled reports from law enforcement agencies across the country identifying 7,163 bias-motivated criminal incidents that were directed against an individual because of their personal characteristics. Law enforcement agencies identified 8,795 victims arising from 8,373 separate criminal offenses. As in the past, racially-motivated bias accounted for more than half (54.7 percent) of all incidents. Religious bias accounted for 1,227 incidents (17.1 percent) and sexual orientation bias accounted for 1,017 incidents—(14.2 percent), followed by ethnicity/national origin bias with 944 incidents—(13.7 percent). While these numbers are disturbing, it is important to note that, for a variety of reasons, hate crimes are seriously under-reported.

Despite the deep impact of hate violence on communities, current law limits federal jurisdiction over hate crimes to incidents directed against individuals on the basis of race, religion, color or national origin—but only when the victim is targeted because he/she is engaged in a federally protected activities, such as voting. Further, the statutes do not permit federal involvement in a range of cases where crimes are motivated by bias against the victim's perceived sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability. The federal government must have authority to be involved in investigating and prosecuting these crimes when state authorities cannot or will not do so.

This legislation, which is identical to the version approved in the 109th Congress, will strengthen existing federal law in the same way that the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996 helped federal prosecutors combat church arson: by addressing the unduly rigid jurisdictional requirements under federal law. The bill only applies to bias-motivated violent crimes and does not impinge public speech or writing in any way. In fact, the measure includes an explicit First Amendment free speech protection for the accused modeled on the existing Washington state hate crimes statute.

State and local authorities currently prosecute the overwhelming majority of hate crimes and will continue to do so under this legislation. The federal government will continue to defer to state and local authorities in the vast majority of cases; the Attorney General or another high ranking Justice Department official must approve any prosecutions undertaken pursuant to this law, ensuring federal restraint. However, in appropriate circumstances, the federal government will be able to provide support for local prosecutions—an intergovernmental grant program created by this legislation will make Justice Department technical, forensic or prosecutorial assistance available. The legislation also authorizes the Attorney General to make grants to state and local law enforcement agencies that have incurred extraordinary expenses associated with the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes.

The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007 is a constructive and measured response to a problem that continues to plague our nation. Hate crime statistics do not speak for themselves. Behind each of the statistics is an individual or community targeted for violence for no other reason than race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability. Law enforcement authorities and civic leaders have learned that a failure to address the problem of bias crime can cause a seemingly isolated incident to fester into widespread tension that can damage the social fabric of the wider community. This problem cuts across party lines, and I am glad to be joined by so many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in proposing this legislation today. These are crimes that shock and shame our national conscience and should be subject to comprehensive federal law enforcement assistance and prosecution.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, March 19, 2007, I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on rollcall No. 158, agreeing to H.R. 658—Natural Resource Protection Cooperative Agreement Act.

COMMENDING FLOWER MOUND HIGH SCHOOL

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate students of Flower Mound High School for their remarkable performance in the State Academic Decathlon competition. This is a competition that includes some of the brightest students in the State of Texas.

Academic Decathlon is a nation-wide competition which tests high school students in the following 10 academic events: speech, interview, essay, super quiz, language and literature, economics, art, music, social science, and math. The competition takes place at a regional, state, and national level. The theme for this year's categories was ''China and its Influence on the W orld.''

In Flower Mound High School's first appearance at the State competition, they finished in 10th place with 41,288 points. Juri Hur, Josh Patterson, and Jamie Choate received gold medals for their outstanding performances. They were joined in the competition by teammates Jonathan Angel, Danielle Bevers, Melissa Bevers, Kayla Gilliard, Leah Higginson, and Heather Snedeker. The team was coached by Judy Kelmer and Julie Tipton.

I would like to recognize Principal Jack Clark and the entire Flower Mound High School faculty for their dedication to education. It is also necessary to honor the parents of these students for the active role that they have taken in their children's education. I commend all of the participants for their diligence and commitment to academic achievement. I wish them the best as they continue onward, and I am very proud and honored to be their Representative in the 26th District of Texas.

TRIBUTE TO GRACE NASH

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, the first day of Spring brought the family and friends of Grace Elizabeth Nash together in celebration of her everlasting life. Grace Nash passed from this life to be with her Savior on Friday, March 16, 2007 at the age of 52 years.

A native of Jamaica, Grace Nash graduated from the University of Findlay in 1978. She settled in Bowling Green, Ohio and dedicated her career to elder advocacy. She was the activities director for the Wood County Committee on Aging for 22 years until her retirement, when she took on the challenge as executive coordinator of the Ohio Association of Senior Centers. Grace was talented, giving, and truly invested in the lives of the older adults she served and the younger adults she mentored. Her tenure with the Wood County Committee on Aging was marked by a dynamism and professionalism which was unmatched.

Spirituality was woven into the very fibers of Grace's life, and she was the administrator of her congregation, New Life Pentecostals of Toledo Church. Her pastor described her perfectly: Grace ''was passionate, she was a dreamer, she had lots of energy, and she was very spiritual. The people who knew her called her Amazing Grace.'' Indeed she was. With quiet dignity, a ready smile and a helping hand, Grace embodied her name.

Grace Elizabeth Nash leaves a legacy to all whose lives she touched, and many who did not have the privilege of knowing her. Among the people who were so privileged, she will be missed. We extend our heartfelt condolences to them, and especially her brother, sisters, nieces and nephews. May they find comfort in their memories and the gift of Grace's life.

PERSONAL EXPLORATION

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, March 19, 2007, I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on roll call No. 159, agreeing to H.R.